



the [♥]comfort of things

A LINE OF WASHING

There are certain things in your home that are like old friends: they always cheer you up. This month we feel the love for pegging out the laundry

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Hanging out the washing is an unusual and surprising thing: a pleasurable household chore. If it's a fresh morning and the sun is shining, the simple act of pegging clothes on a line before you can lift the spirits and blow away gloominess. As the days extend and there's more likelihood of sun, it's also a chance to get outdoors and away from everyone indoors. Doing something methodical provides the opportunity for a moment or two of peaceful reflection – just you, the breeze, a handful of pegs and some billowing sheets. The results are also worth it: the fresh, outdoor smell of line-dried laundry will have you burying your nose in the laundry basket and inhaling deeply. As a method of drying clothes, pegging out is 100% better than piling them in an energy-gobbling, clothes-battering tumble

"The simple act of pegging out clothes can dispel gloominess"

dryer, or heaping them on radiators and leaving them to steam.

Whether you have a washing line stretched across the garden and supported by a wooden pole, an extendable line that snaps back into position or a rotary dryer, the methods of pegging out are the same. To minimise ironing, give everything a shake before hanging it up and rather than bundle them in a basket, fold things as you take them down. Don't cram stuff on the line: leave a gap between each item to allow the wind to whip through and do its thing. Alternate between long and short items to facilitate this further. It's best to hang tops from the bottom and bottoms from the top – this prevents shoulders on shirts stretching and knobby peg marks appearing.

This all depends on a sunny day, of course. It is an unfortunate truth that once washing is on the line, the first rain cloud often appears. You can see this as a positive – rainwater is supposed to act as a fabric conditioner – or you could rush out, unpeg the lot and pile them on an indoor airer instead. Not as life-affirming, but it will get the job done.



Chilton beech ceiling dryer £85, gardentrading.co.uk

A GUIDE TO AIRERS

When it's too wet to peg out, it's time to embrace the indoor alternatives

CONCERTINA AIRER

The classic airer seen draped with knickers on landings and spare rooms for generations. Its collapsible/extendable function means it can be packed flat and snuck under a bed or in a cupboard to store. Habitat has a solid beech one (Misto, £30, habitat.co.uk) which is satisfyingly wooden and old-school.

HEATED AIRER

Beloved by many for its ability to dry clothes quickly and its economical running cost. There are variations depending on the size of your household: the Dry:Soon Standard 3-tier Heated Tower Airer (£109.99, 21m of drying space, lakeland.co.uk) is ideal for families.

ROTARY AIRER

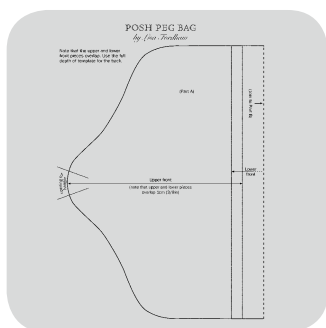
This compact way to dry clothes outdoors enables many items to be hung neatly and whipped around by a breeze to dry faster. The Brabantia Lift-O-Matic Rotary Airer (£61.99, robertdyas.co.uk) is sturdy and portable.

CEILING AIRER

Suspend one of these, above, in the kitchen and winch your laundry off the floor with cords and pulleys. Not great if the washing is still dripping wet but good for raising it into the room's warm air pockets. For a contemporary take, Pulleymaid's Modern Clothes Airer is made from stainless steel (rather than cast-iron) and Scandinavian pine lathes (from £89.99, pulleymaid.com).

THREE TO MAKE, BUY OR CUSTOMISE

Every washing line needs a bag full of pegs nearby for easy pegging out. Buy a readymade one, turn a favourite piece of material into a bespoke version or cunningly create one from a child's polo shirt



1 MAKE

A peg bag is basically an envelope of fabric suspended from a clothes hanger, so it's relatively easy to sew one. Register at sewandso.co.uk to download a PDF of a free Posh Peg Bag pattern, above, by Lisa Fordham. You will need a piece of fabric measuring 25x54cm (laminated or PVC fabric is best for weather resistance); a 60x2.5cm piece of bias binding and a wire coat hanger. Instructions are on ideas.sewandso.co.uk/vintage-peg-bag-sewing-pattern/.



2 BUY

You could just fill your pockets with pegs as you head to the line, but it feels more orderly to fish them out of the custom-made bag hanging prettily before you. The continuing trend for all things vintage means that there are plenty of options to choose from, in a variety of sprigged fabrics. The sort of thing you won't feel embarrassed about displaying to your neighbours. This Duck Egg Peggy Peg Bag (£6, raggedrose.com) has the necessary retro charm.



3 CUSTOMISE

Here's a clever thing: peg bags are suspended from a hanger so, rather than create a new bag from scratch, why not use an item that is already the right shape and size? Buy a child's polo shirt (the one above is £3.99, hm.com), or better still use one they have grown out of or no longer like. Turn it inside out, stitch the bottom of the shirt closed about half way down the length of the body, trim surplus fabric, and turn it the right way round. Insert a child's hanger and fill with pegs. Job done.



HOME QUANDARIES

Does anyone actually iron any longer? A pile of washed clothes folded in the laundry basket post-drying fills me with guilt, as I know it will never be ironed. As a result, all members of my household go out into the world looking rumpled and unkempt, the bedlinen is creased and I shove tea towels into drawers hoping they will somehow flatten. Are there any clever ways to cheat at ironing?

Answer in brief: *only iron when absolutely necessary.*

According to the Office of National Statistics, only 10% of the UK's washing gets ironed, so most of us are with you on this one. Many tips abound about how to dodge the iron, from hanging clothes up in a steamy bathroom, to eliminating wrinkles on collars with hair straighteners. Mostly, though, it's a matter of not caring. Which is fine if that means your duvet isn't flawlessly smooth but less good if you have a cotton blouse and a meeting to attend. Natural fibres benefit from ironing, man-made, not so much. Be selective about what gets ironed and what doesn't and the whole business is more manageable.

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**Polycarbonate pegs |
£1.75 for ten**

Lighter and grippier than
dolly pegs, truth be told.
muji.eu

**Beech ironing board,
£95 | cover, £22**

Could almost make
ironing a pleasure.
gardentrading.co.uk

Lavender water | £24

Dilute and add to your
iron for fragrant steaming.
labourandwait.co.uk

**Soda Crystals laundry
boost | £2.49**

Helps shift those more
stubborn stains.
biggreensmile.com

**Red cedar hanger |
£12.95 for three**

Repels moths in the
wardrobe. muji.eu

**Garden Trading
vintage wall dryer |
£27**

Handy for a utility room
or for tea towels.
amazon.co.uk

**Kitchen Craft peg tin
with hook | £15.95**

A smart container to take
out to the washing line.
wayfair.co.uk

**Bobby Rabbit
charcoal basket | £50**

With washable cover:
handy for kids' clothes.
bobbyrabbit.co.uk

**Compact pull-out
clothes line | £17.99**

22m of line and plastic
central pole. By Brabantia
at argos.co.uk